

**THE COLONIAL THEATRE SCHOOL, INC.
P.O. Box 762
WESTERLY, RI 02891**

December 5, 2018

Dear Westerly Community, Colonial Partners, and Supporters:

The Colonial Theatre School, Inc., also known as “Shakespeare in the Park”, has recently received and accepted the resignation of its longstanding, Producing Artistic Director and member of the Board of Trustees, Harland D. Meltzer. In a recent email statement to the Board, Meltzer writes “I find that the exigencies of care for my parents leaves me without sufficient time and energy to properly fulfill my functions at The Colonial.”

The Colonial wishes to express its gratitude to Harland for his 33 years of leadership in establishing The Colonial. Under Harland’s direction, The Colonial began in April of 1985 by producing equity theatre performances in what is today’s Granite Theatre in Westerly, RI. In 1991, The Colonial introduced its Shakespeare Festival in Westerly’s Wilcox Park which ran consistently for over 25 summer productions. In 2001, The Colonial initiated its “Shakespeare-To-Go” program in public schools in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Most recently, Meltzer helped launch a groundbreaking partnership with the Westerly Public Schools that would not only establish a permanent acting curriculum for Westerly’s high school students, but would also provide a “professional pathway” for students to engage in vocational skills training through professional, theatrical productions. The Colonial wishes Harland well as he dedicates his time and energies to caring for his elderly parents in New York City.

Since the 2018 spring semester, The Colonial’s program with Westerly Public Schools has been led by its actors/educators Jon Peacock and Alana Rader. On account of generous grants from the Town of Westerly, the Rhode Island Foundation, and others, the Colonial will be presenting a student production of Thornton Wilder’s “Our Town.” Performances will be held on December 7th (7:30 pm), 8th (7:30 pm) and 9th (2 pm) in the Westerly Public School’s Babcock Auditorium, The Colonial Theatre’s new theatrical home and classroom. The first High School drama class that will be part of Westerly’s main curriculum is currently scheduled for spring 2019. Additionally, The Colonial’s Board of Trustees voted in favor of producing a Shakespeare Festival in Wilcox Park in the summer of 2019.

Springing from Harland Meltzer’s original vision and leadership, The Colonial Theatre is entering a new era with an even stronger focus on theatrical education featuring its role-model partnership with the Westerly Public Schools. The Board of Trustees recognizes that The Colonial is a longstanding, cherished community asset that has a responsibility to the community, partners, and supporters that it serves. We ask that the community to continue to support The Colonial as it grows and expands with this new chapter.

Sincerely,

The Board of Trustees